

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

FILM AND VIDEO EDITORS



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INTEREST AREA
ARTISTIC



Comedies, for example, require a specific type of timing. Editors must estimate how long audiences will laugh at each gag line or situation in order to space scenes so that one funny incident is not lost in the laughter of the previous one.

Film and Video Editors perform the following tasks to complete a film:

- Evaluate and select scenes in terms of dramatic and entertainment value and story continuity.
- Trim film segments to specified lengths and reassemble segments in sequence that presents story with maximum effect.
- Use editing equipment to insert music, dialogue, and sound effects.
- Review assembled film or edited videotape on screen or monitor and make corrections.
- Work with Sound Effects Editors and Music Editors.

Sound Effects Editors

Sound Effects Editors perform the following tasks to provide sounds that match the action on screen:

- Work with Film and Video Editors, directors, and other technicians to analyze the sound requirements of the picture.
- Record needed sounds or obtain them from sound effects libraries.
- Assemble sound tracks recorded after action is filmed.

Music Editors

Music Editors perform the following tasks to enhance the film with background music:

- Discuss the music requirements of the film with directors and composers before they select music for a film.

WHAT DO FILM AND VIDEO EDITORS DO?

Motion picture and television films are shot following a schedule without regard for story continuity. Scenes are often filmed several times and from different angles. FILM AND VIDEO EDITORS select the most effective shot of each scene and combine them in sequence to form a logical and smoothly running story. They may discard scenes that do not help plot development. When selecting and assembling scenes, Editors try to achieve the best combination of photography, performance, consistency, and timing.

- Describe each scene and note the required length of time for composers.
- Use music libraries to find the proper music for productions that do not use original scores.
- Synchronize music tracks with the picture after the music is composed and recorded.

Assistant Editors

Assistant Editors perform the following tasks:

- Prepare the work for Editors.
- Provide general support services for Film Editors.
- Maintain schedules and arrange screenings for directors and producers.
- Supervise apprentices.

Increasingly, films and television productions are edited on computer editing equipment, although feature films are still edited in the traditional way on flatbed editing machines called Moviolas. In the traditional method of editing, Editors run strips of film through these machines at various speeds. They mark frames where a particular shot or piece of sound is to begin or end. After the scenes are edited, Assistant Editors join separate strips of film on a splicer. The sequences are then ready for viewing. Computer editing uses personal computers and special software to rearrange film sequences.

In the television industry, almost all work is done on videotape rather than film. Videotape editing requires some additional special training on the various electronic equipment used in the editing process.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Film and Video Editors frequently use the following skills, knowledge, and abilities:

- **Synthesis/Reorganization** – Reorganizing information to get a better approach to problems or tasks.
- **Monitoring** – Assessing how well one is doing when learning or doing something.
- **Information Organization** – Finding ways to structure or classify multiple pieces of information.

- **Product Inspection** – Inspecting and evaluating the quality of products.
- **Communication and Media** – Knowledge of media production, communication, and dissemination techniques and methods including alternative ways to inform and entertain via written, oral, and visual media.

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Film and Video Editors work in cutting rooms, projection rooms, and on shooting stages. The newer cutting rooms usually have space for three or four editing benches, viewing machines, and film bins. These rooms are adequately ventilated and lighted. Deadlines and high production costs can create considerable pressure for Film Editors.

Most jobs are in Los Angeles, with a smaller number in the San Francisco area and in larger metropolitan areas.

Union Membership

Most Film and Video Editors belong to the Motion Picture and Videotape Editors Guild of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), while others in the television industry are affiliated with the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), or are covered by an industrial union agreement.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 1998:	2,200
Estimated number of workers in 2008:	2,800
Projected Growth 1998-2008:	27.3%
Est. openings due to separations by 2008:	800
<i>These figures do not include self-employment.</i>	

The projected growth rate of 27.3 percent indicates that Film and Video Editor occupations are growing faster than average compared with all occupations. The estimated number of job opportunities from 1998 through 2008 is expected to total 1,400.

Trends

Film editing has changed very little since the 1940s; its complex process of shooting and editing is something that many Film and Video Editors find alien and completely mystifying.

Film and video editing has changed radically over the last few years and should change even more radically in the years to come. Already, DVD, streaming media, interactive television, and the constantly changing film and video editing software involved have transformed the occupation.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Film and Video Editors 2001 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$12.44	to	\$27.79
Average hourly wage	\$20.99		
Average annual wage	\$43,669		

Source: Occupational Employment Survey of Employers by EDD/LMID.

Pay rates in the motion picture industry tend to be somewhat higher than rates in television because of the type of editing and the degree of skill involved. The pay scales are contractual and subject to a percentage increase each year. Contract negotiations occur every three years.

Since motion picture work has seasonal fluctuations, Film Editors may work only a few weeks a year. Much of the work in the industry is freelance, which often pays a high salary because of the short-term nature of employment.

Hours

The peak hiring period in television runs from July through February, while employment in the motion picture industry varies considerably because of actor commitments, release dates, and weather conditions. There are no regular peak periods.

Employment is often seasonal. Editors who work in educational or industrial films do not usually experience seasonal fluctuations.

The normal workweek for Film and Video Editors varies from 40-60 hours. Overtime is usually paid at time and a half or double time. Editors receive

up to four times their hourly rate when they work over 12 consecutive hours on weekends and holidays.

Benefits

Film and Video Editors receive vacation, sick leave, pension plan, and group health and life insurance coverage. A substantial number of Editors are not union affiliated. Some nonunion Editors may have pay scales similar to union rates, but may not receive all of the union benefits.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

A bachelor's degree with courses in all phases of filmmaking is often helpful for Apprentice Film Editors. Although film school is useful, it is not a strict educational requirement for Editors. Work experience in a university or college film department is also helpful. Film and Video Editors should be creative, communicate effectively, and have good judgment. Normal or corrected vision is essential. Beginners receive on-the-job training in all basic editorial skills.

Licensing and Certification

A State license or certificate is not required for Film and Video Editors.

Continuing Education

Film and Video Editors may be required to take formal courses to keep abreast of changes in the profession, particularly since there is little time for on-the-job training. To increase their employment opportunities, Editors on all levels should learn more about the various computer-based editing systems in use. Increasingly, these devices will replace traditional techniques.

For information on continuing educational opportunities contact the unions and associations listed under "Other Sources of Information."

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Film and Video Editors usually find work through registration with the union, but direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job

search methods. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Motion Picture Producers, Production Companies and Studios. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site, www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Apprentice Film Editors may be promoted to Assistant Editors in fewer than three years of union membership. Five years on the union's list are necessary for Assistants to be promoted to full editorships. Highly skilled Film and Video Editors sometimes advance into production or direction.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)
1430 Broadway, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10018
(212) 730-1770
www.iatse.lm.com/index.html

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)
West Coast Office
10045 Riverside Drive
Toluca Lake, CA 91602
(818) 980-3499
Fax: (818) 980-3496
www.iatse.lm.com/index.html

Motion Picture Editors Guild - Local 700
7715 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 200
Hollywood, CA 90046
(323) 876-4770
www.editorsguild.com

National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET)
433 Natoma Street, Suite 220
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 398-3160
www.nabet51.org

National Association of Broadcasters
1771 N Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 429-5300
www.nab.org

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences
8949 Wilshire Boulevard
Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972
(310) 247-3000
www.oscars.org

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)
1125 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 833-7000
www.ibew.org

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Broadcast Technicians	No. 359
Motion Picture Photographers (Theatrical)	No. 519

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Film and Video Editors 27-4032

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Film and Video Editors 27-4032.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Film Editors 34032

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)
Film or Videotape Editor 962.262-010
Optical Effects Layout Person 962.361-010
Sound Cutter 962.382-014